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GAZA  
A CITY OF MANY BATTLES  
(FROM THE FAMILY OF NOAH TO THE PRESENT DAY)  
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(p. 38)

A.D. 1584.—Samaritans are known to have lived in Gaza at this date, and possessed a synagogue. Two large baths in the city belonged to them. One of them still bears the name of "the Bath of the Samaritans." In (p. 39) 1907 an inscription was found at Gaza with a Biblical text, in Samaritan characters. The writing is not ancient, and it is still in the possession of the Muslim finder. During the occupancy of the Pashas of Gaza, one of them (of the fourth family Eid wan) desired to procure the inn and bath belonging to the Samaritan community. The owner objected, and gave them to the Muslims for the benefit of the Great Mosque. The Pasha consequently was indignant, and hanged the Samaritan at the gate of the inn. From the end of the sixteenth century we hear nothing more of the Samaritans at Gaza. (For additional information see also Chapter VI.)

(p. 48) CHAPTER VI  
THE SAMARITANS

MEYER supplies some valuable information about the Samaritans in Gaza on pages 71-2, from which I gratefully cull a few sentences. He writes of their having settled there early, maintaining themselves as a separate community till the modern period. A complete history is impossible, because of the meagreness of the record. It is remarkable how this little sect spread all over Palestine, and even into Egypt. There are records of the Samaritans at Gaza from the fourth to the seventeenth centuries. According to the Samaritan Chronicle of the High Priest Eleazar, the territory of Palestine, and other parts of Syria and Egypt, were assigned to various Samaritan families at the time of Baba the Great (end of fourth century). That extending from Gaza to the River of Egypt was given to Israel ben Machir, and Shalum was assigned to it as Priest; the territory from Carmel to Gaza to Laib ben Becher, with Joseph as its Priest. All the Samaritans who settled at Gaza were of the tribe of Benjamin, excepting Mouzaf ben Mitpalel of the tribe of

Ephraim. The Martyr Paul of Gaza, c. A.D. 300, before his death at Caesarea, prayed for the Samaritans of his native town.

During the reign of Justinian, c. A.D. 529, the imperial troops once occupied the city on the occasion of an uprising of the Samaritan inhabitants of the district, and the citizens were greatly disturbed. The Bishop Marcianus stepped into the breach, and settled the affair by organising a militia to which the matters in dispute were (p. 49) referred. The imperial troops were withdrawn, and peace was restored.

There were many Samaritans at Gaza in the seventh century. After the Muslim conquest, A.D. 634, the Samaritans of Gaza deposited their property with their high priest, and fled to the east.

The five hundred Samaritans who had been captured at Shechem by Bazawash, governor of Demascus, c. A.D. 1137, were redeemed by a co-religionist of Acre. Many of these settled in Gaza.

In A.D. 1674 the Samaritans living at Gaza addressed a letter to Robert Huntington, who was deeply interested in their religion and literature.

Clermont-Ganneau reports the finding of a Samaritan liturgical inscription at Gaza, but does not produce it either in the original or in translation. Able also reports a fragment of a decalogue in the Samaritan script of the Mohammedan period.

Among the *Gleanings from the Minute Books* of the Jerusalem Literature Society, November 1849, Mr. E. T. Rogers remarks that the Samaritans are still quite a distinct set of people, as they were in the time of our Saviour. They make no proselytes; never intermarry with people of other sects, and are particularly clean as a people; none others are known than those now in Nablus. Their principal distinction in the oriental crowd is that they wear a crimson turban.

When the Rev. Dr. E. H. Thomson visited Nablus, in May 1898, he asked after the fate of the Samaritan community that was still surviving in Gaza when Baron Sylvestre de Sacy, c. 1829, corresponded with the Samaritans of Nablus. He was informed that the community in Gaza had ceased to exist some sixty years (p. 50) before. Now, at all events, these one hundred and sixty Samaritans resident in Nablus are all that remain of the Samaritan race and creed.

Mr. J. G. Pickard, writing from Gaza in *The Quarterly Statement* P. E. F., July 1873, reports on the newly discovered Samaritan Stone of which the inscription is a passage in Deuteronomy iv. 29-31. It has been suggested that this stone belonged to a Samaritan synagogue in Gaza. The spot where the stone was discovered is about a mile "and a half from the sea shore.

### **Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com**

This reference is not located in *A Bibliography of the Samaritans, Third Edition, Revised, Expanded, and Annotated*, by Alan David Crown and Reinhard Pummer, ATLA Bibliography, No. 51, **The Scarecrow Press, Inc.** Lanham, Maryland, Toronto, Oxford. 2005

Title: **Jerusalem Literary Society:** founded November 20, 1849  
Author: Jerusalem Literary Society Published by Wertheim, Macintosh & Hunt, 1858  
Length: 62 pages Subjects: Speeches, addresses, etc